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2 Compensating for Color Response and Transfer Function of  
3 Scanner and/or Printer When Reading a Digital Watermark  
4

5 **Related Applications:**

6 Priority is claimed based upon co-pending application 60/173,880 filed 12/31/00  
7

8 **Field of the Invention:**

9 The present invention relates to steganography and more particularly to reading digital  
10 watermarks.  
11

12 **Background of the Invention:**

13 The technology for inserting digital watermarks in digital images and for reading digital  
14 watermarks from digital images is well developed. There are many issued patents and  
15 published technical papers which explain the technology for reading watermarks.  
16

17 Frequently after a digital watermark has been inserted into a digital image, the image is  
18 printed and later the printed image is scanned to create a new digital image. However,  
19 printers and scanners do not precisely reproduce images. That is, printers and scanners  
20 introduce anomalies, distortions and changes into an image as it is being printed or  
21 scanned. The typical operations which are performed on watermarked images are  
22 illustrated in Figures 1A and 1B.  
23

24 The process begins with a digital image 10A. An image editing program 11 is used to  
25 insert a digital watermark into the image. For example a watermark may be inserted into  
26 the image 10A by the watermark program which is part of the commercially available  
27 image editing program marketed by Adobe Corporation under the trademark "Adobe  
28 Photoshop". Next, a printer 12 is used to create a physical image 10B which includes a  
29 digital watermark.  
30

31 Next as illustrated in Figure 1B, the physical image 10B is passed through a scanner 13  
32 to generate a digital image 10C. The digital image is then processed by a watermark  
33 detection program 14 to detect the watermark. For example the watermark may be

Handwritten signature or initials.

EWG-097 Scanner compensation

1 detected by the watermark detection program which is part of the commercially available  
2 image editing program marketed by Adobe Corporation under the trademark "Adobe  
3 Photoshop".

4  
5 Printer 12 and the scanner 13 generally do not have a perfect color response and they  
6 have transfer functions which is other than unity. That is, they introduce anomalies,  
7 distortions or changes into the image. For example, with some scanners, if a printed  
8 image is scanned and then displayed, the appearance of the displayed image will not be  
9 identical appearance to the hard copy image. Likewise, with some printers, if a digital  
10 image is printed, the printed image will not appear to be identical to a display of the  
11 original digital image. As used herein the term scanner is used to mean conventional  
12 flatbed and sheet feed scanners as well as other image acquisition devices such as  
13 digital cameras. Anomalies, distortions or changes introduced into an image by a printer  
14 or scanner are hereinafter collectively referred to as "artifacts". Such artifacts may  
15 interfere with the operation of the watermark detection program 13 or with programs  
16 used to detect patterns or geometric shapes in an image.

17  
18 Some watermark or pattern detection programs compensate for scale and rotation of an  
19 image. However, the prior art watermark and pattern detection programs do not  
20 adequately compensate for artifacts introduced into an image by a printer or scanner.  
21 Such artifacts can make detection of a digital watermark or pattern difficult if not  
22 impossible. This is particularly true when such artifacts are coupled with other changes  
23 such as scaling, rotation and wear and tear.

24  
25 **Summary of the Invention:**

26 Watermark and pattern detection can be improved by compensating for artifacts  
27 introduced into an image by a printer and/or scanner through which the image has  
28 passed. With the present invention, prior to watermark or pattern detection, the image is  
29 filtered or modified to compensate for artifacts introduced by the printer and/or scanner.

30  
31 Some scanners automatically compensate for artifacts introduced by the scanner by  
32 using a calibrated tone map. The automatic compensation provides an image from  
33 which, a watermark can be easily read. However, generally the user is provided with an

1 interface which can be used to change certain parameters such contrast and intensity.  
2 The changes made by the user change the compensation (i.e. the tone map) applied to  
3 the image. If the user changes the compensation applied to the image it can affect the  
4 ability to read the watermark. The present invention provides a system which reverses  
5 any compensation introduced by the user so that the watermark or pattern can be more  
6 easily read.

8 In another embodiment the invention takes into consideration that some printers and  
9 scanners have transfer functions which differ in the "x" and "y" directions. Thus the  
10 compensation introduced by the filter can differ in the "x" and "y" directions. In one  
11 embodiment, a scanner introduces aliasing frequencies into an image. Detection is  
12 improved by selectively removing certain frequencies. In another embodiment, the filter  
13 compensates for fact that the scanner frequency response falls off at higher frequencies.

#### 15 **Brief Description of the Figures:**

16 Figures 1A and 1B show the process used in the prior art.  
17 Figure 2 illustrates a preferred embodiment of the invention using TWAIN interface.  
18 Figures 3A and 3B are flow diagrams illustrating the operation of the present invention.  
19 Figure 3C shows the change in Gamma curve due to user setting.  
20 Figures 4A and 4B show the process used in an alternate embodiment of the present  
21 invention.  
22 Figure 5A, 5B and 5C are used to describe an alternate embodiment of the invention.  
23 Figure 6 illustrates a technique for detecting the transfer function of a scanner and  
24 printer.

#### 26 **Detailed Description of embodiments of the invention:**

27 The preferred embodiment of the invention described herein utilizes the invention to  
28 facilitate detecting and reading a digital watermark from an image. As explained later,  
29 the invention can also be used to facilitate the operation of other types of image analysis  
30 programs such as programs that detection geometric shapes, logos or other patterns. It  
31 is also noted that the preferred embodiment utilizes a scanner as an image acquisition  
32 device. Other types of image acquisition devices such as digital cameras could also be  
33 used with the present invention.

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The first preferred embodiment of the present invention is shown in Figure 2. The system shown in Figure 2 includes a computer 30 and a scanner 24. In the particular embodiment described herein the scanner 24 is the Hewlett-Packard ScanJet model 6300c scanner (hereinafter HP 6300). The computer 30 can be a personal computer operating under the Microsoft Windows operating system.

The computer 30 includes an application program 21, and a watermark reading program 26. The application program 21 may, for example, be an image editing program such as "Adobe Photoshop" which is marketed by Adobe Corporation of San Jose California. The watermark reading program 26 may for example be similar to the watermark reading program which is included as a part to the Adobe PhotoShop program; however, as used here the watermark reading program 26 is separate from the application program 21.

The HP 6300 scanner uses what is known in the art as a "TWAIN" interface. The application program 21 is connected to a scanner 24 using a TWAIN interface 20. The TWAIN interface was developed by the TWAIN Working Group and it provides a standard software protocol and application programming interface (API) that regulates communication between software applications and imaging devices such as scanners.

Two key elements in a system that uses the TWAIN interface are the source manager software and the data source software. These elements are described in detail in the TWAIN specification which is available on the Internet at a site maintained by the TWAIN organization. This site can be located by doing an Internet search under the name TWAIN. The TWAIN specifications version 1.9 as ratified by the TWAIN working group on January 20, 2000 is hereby incorporated herein by reference.

As shown in Figure 2, the system includes data source manager software 22 data source software 23. The data source manager software 22 is a widely available program which provides an interface to a wide variety of imaging devices. The data source program 23 and the application program 21 have a TWAIN compliant interface to the data source manager 22. The data source program 23 provides a hardware

1 dependent connection to the scanner 24. The HP 6300 is provided to users with a data  
2 source program which has a user interface, a TWAIN interface and a hardware interface  
3 to scanner 24. It should be appreciated that the invention can be applied to a large  
4 number of similar scanners. The present invention provides a modified data source  
5 program 23. Only those parts of the data source program 23 that are relevant to the  
6 present invention will be described herein. The remaining parts of the data source  
7 program 23 are conventional.

8  
9 The data source software 23 communicates with the scanner 24 using a Scanner  
10 Control Language (SCL). This SCL language is described in a manual entitled "Scanner  
11 Control Language (SCL) and C Language Library for Hewlett-Packard Scanners v 11.0"  
12 which is published and distributed by Hewlett-Packard Corporation. This manual is  
13 hereby incorporated herein in its entirety and is hereinafter referred to as the scanner  
14 SCL Manual. Only those parts of data source program 23 that are relevant to the  
15 present invention are described herein.

16  
17 A user interface provided by data source program 23 allows a user to change the tone  
18 and contrast of the image produced by scanner 24. The present invention is directed to  
19 insuring that changes made by the user do not interfere with the operation of the  
20 watermark detection program 26.

21  
22 The scanner 24 includes a mechanism for providing a Gamma correction to the scanned  
23 image. The Gamma correction curve (i.e. an adjustment for the luminosity of each pixel  
24 in a scanned image) is controlled by a tone map which can be downloaded into the  
25 scanner by the data source program 23. In the scanner 24, the RGB values for each  
26 pixel are first adjusted in accordance the values in a 3 by 3 matrix which adjusts each  
27 color based on the values of the other colors of that pixel. Next the luminance value of  
28 each pixel is adjusted in accordance with a Gamma curve that specifies an adjustment  
29 for each particular luminance value. The term tone map as used herein refers to the  
30 values for the 3 by 3 matrix and the values which specify an appropriate adjustment for  
31 each luminance value (that is, the Gamma curve).

1 In the following discussion reference will be made to the following three tone maps:

2 1) Default tone map: a tone map stored in the printer that is used to adjust an  
3 image if no other tone map is provided to the printer.

4 2) Calibrated tone map: a tone map which is generated from a test pattern and  
5 which is designed to produce, in so far as possible, a true digital  
6 representation of the scanned image. As used herein, the term a true  
7 digital representation means a digital image which when displayed  
8 appears identical to the original printed image that was scanned. A  
9 technique for generating a calibrated tone map is described later with  
10 reference to Figure 3B.

11 3) User adjusted tone map: a tone map which is generated in response to user  
12 input to change an image so that the image has the contrast and intensity  
13 requested by the user.

14  
15 The data source program 23 provides a conventional user interface through which a  
16 user can change the contrast and intensity of a scanned image. When a user changes  
17 the desired contrast and intensity of an image, the calibrated tone map is changed into  
18 the user adjusted tone map so that the image will have the user specified characteristics.  
19 This is a conventional operation which is preformed by the data source program that is  
20 provided with the HP6300 scanner.

21  
22 When an image is scanned, the resulting digital data, corrected in accordance with the  
23 user adjusted tone map, is sent to the application program 21. The data is also sent to  
24 an inverse user adjustment program 25. The inverse user adjustment program 25  
25 reverses any changes made to the image to satisfy the settings entered by the user.  
26 The output of the inverse user adjustment program 25 is a digital image that is identical  
27 to the digital image that would have been produced if the calibrated tone map had been  
28 applied to the image instead of the user modified tone map. The image as changed by  
29 inverse user adjustment program 25 is then sent to the watermark reading program 26.

30  
31 The inverse user adjustment program 25 determines what changes were made to the  
32 calibrated tone map as a result of inputs from the user. Inverse user adjustment  
33 program 25 then applies the inverse of these changes to the image produced by

24 25 26

1 scanner 24. The inverse user adjustment program 25 is a program that performs a  
2 inverse table look up operation. Programs to perform a inverse table look up are  
3 conventional. The action performed by inverse user adjustment program 25 is illustrated  
4 in Figure 3C. When a user adjusts the contrast setting, the shape of the Gamma curve  
5 is changed. Figure 3C illustrates what happens to the Gamma curve when the user  
6 adjusts the contrast of the image. In the example shown, the contrast  
7 setting was lowered by the user. As a result of the changes by the user the Gamma  
8 curve was changed and at the upper end (at higher intensity) the pixels are given a  
9 lower intensity than prior to the adjustment. The inverse user adjustment program 25  
10 reverses the delta created by the user settings.

25 26 27

11 The following example illustrates the what occurs when the calibrated tone map is  
12 changed into a user adjusted tone map and how the inverse user adjustment program  
13 25 operates.

14 15

16 Assume that the calibrated tone map has the following values (for convenience only a  
17 small section of the tone map is give).

18 19

Calibrated tone map values:

Input values	251	252	253	254	255	256	257	258	259
output values	249	250	251	252	253	254	255	256	257

20 21 22

Let us assume that due to inputs from the user, the following user adjusted tone map is  
generated (again only a small portion of the map is shown).

23

Input values	251	252	253	254	255	256	257	258	259
Output values	248	249	250	251	252	253	254	255	256

24 25 26

The inverse user adjustment program 25 would perform a reverse table look up as  
follows:

27 28 29

When, for example, it receives a value of 256, it would perform a reverse table look in  
the User Adjusted Tone map and determine that the 256 value came from an input value  
of 259. It would then adjust this value to 257 as specified by the calibrated tone map.

1  
2 The operation of the system is illustrated in Figures 3A and 3B. Figure 3A illustrates the  
3 normal operations that occur when an image is scanned. Figure 3B illustrates the  
4 operations that are used to generate a calibrated tone map and to initialize the system.  
5 The operations shown in Figure 3A normally take place each time the scanner is used to  
6 acquire an image. However, it should be noted that the operations illustrated in Figure  
7 3A take place after a calibrated tone map has been generated and stored in the data  
8 source 23 using the technique illustrated in Figure 3B. .

9  
10 The operation of the system as illustrated in Figure 3A will now be explained. As  
11 indicated by box 301 when a user wants to scan an image, the user sets the tone and  
12 intensity controls (or indicates that the defaults settings should be used). As indicated  
13 by block 302, the calibrated tone map is then changed to produce a user adjusted tone  
14 map (i.e. a tone map which will produce an image with the desired tone and intensity).

15  
16 As indicated by block 303, the user adjusted tone map is sent to the scanner. As  
17 indicated by blocks 304 and 305, the image is then scanned and the scanner applies the  
18 user adjusted tone map to the digital data generated by the scanner. The image  
19 adjusted by the user adjusted image is herein termed an adjusted digital image.

20  
21 As indicated by block 314, the adjusted digital image( i.e. the digital image with the user  
22 adjusted tone map applied) is supplied to the inverse user adjustment program 25.  
23 Program 25 reverses the changes made in the tone map to satisfy the user entered tone  
24 and contrast setting. The result is that inverse user adjustment program 25 produces a  
25 corrected image adjusted according to the calibrated tone map. As illustrated in Figure  
26 3C, the inverse user adjustment program 25 changes the image such that the result of  
27 both the correction made in the scanner and the correction made by inverse user  
28 adjustment program 25 (i.e. the sum of both corrections) is the same correction as would  
29 have been made by the calibrated tone map if only it had been applied to the image.

30  
31 As indicated by block 315 the system sends the corrected digital image produced by  
32 inverse user adjustment program 25 to watermark reading program 26 which detects  
33 and reads the watermark. The watermark reading program 26 may be a conventional



4 The invention is directed to enhancing the ability to read a watermark. Once the  
5 watermark is read, the data obtained can be used for a large variety of purposes. For  
6 example, once the watermark is read, the data from the watermark can be merely  
7 supplied to an operator or possibly to another program.

9 However, as indicated by dotted blocks 316, 321, 322 and 323, in one alternate  
10 embodiment, the output of the watermark detector 29 controls what data is sent to the  
11 data source manager 22 and to the application program 21. For example, if the  
12 watermark detector reads certain data, such as the name of the copyright owner, the  
13 name of the copyright owner along with the image corrected in accordance with the user  
14 adjusted tone map may be sent to the application program 22. Alternatively, if a  
15 different watermark is read, the image may not be sent to the application program. It  
16 can for example be used accesses a particular web site on the internet in accordance  
17 with the commercially available service market by Digimarc Corporation under the  
18 trademark "MediaBridge".

In its simplest form the control indicated by block 316 can be implemented by a look up table that indicates what operation should be performed depending upon what particular watermark is detected. In the embodiment where the functions illustrated by blocks 316, 322 and 323 are performed, the transfer from data source 23 to data source manager 22 would be controlled by a gating mechanism which would only transfer the data from the scanner to the data source manager 22 and thus to the application program 21 depending on the output of watermark reading program 26. Alternate connections could be provided from data source manager 22 to other applications, again dependent upon the output of watermark reading program 26.

30 In still another embodiment, the output of the inverse user adjustment program 25 is  
31 both sent to a watermark reading program and to a shape recognition program. The  
32 combined output from both of the watermark reading program and the shape recognition  
33 program are then used to determine which operation should be taken.

1  
2 Figure 3B illustrates how the scanner is initialized, how the calibrated tone map is  
3 generated and how the user modified tone map is sent to the scanner. As initially  
4 installed the system uses a default tone map as indicated by block 351. The default  
5 tone map can be a very simple tone map with a straight line relationship between input  
6 and output, that is, a straight line Gamma curve.

7  
8 Next, a test pattern and a calibration program is used to generate the calibrated tone  
9 map. The International Color Consortium has developed a standard color calibration  
10 format. Information about the standard color calibration can be found on a web site  
11 maintained by the Color Consortium. The web site has the name "color" and the group  
12 designator "org" (note URLs are not permitted in a patent application but the URL can be  
13 easily located from the above information)

14  
15 The calibration technique uses a standard color calibration target to create a calibration  
16 profile for the scanner. The scanner is calibrated so that when a color calibrated target  
17 is scanned, the output will be a defined RGB output which faithfully reproduces the color  
18 calibrated target. Thus two scanners from different manufacturers which have been  
19 similarly calibrated will produce similar (if not identical) outputs from the same image.

20  
21 As indicated by blocks 352 and 353, a test pattern is scanned and a test image is  
22 generated using the default tone map. A calibrated tone map, (that is, a tone map  
23 which would have produced an image which faithfully reproduced the test pattern) is  
24 generated as indicated by block 354.

25  
26 There are commercial programs available which can be used to generate the calibrated  
27 tone map. A number of companies including Kodak, Fuji and ColorBlind Inc. provide  
28 calibration packages. The packages can be used for calibrating scanners, printers and  
29 monitors. Details of the calibration packages can be found at a web site maintained by  
30 Kodak corporation and at a web site with the name "itec" and the group designator "net"  
31 and at a web site with the name "ffe" and the designator "co.uk"

1 The calibrated tone map is stored in the data source program 23 as indicated by block  
2 355. Next when a user wants to scan an image, the user may enter desired parameters  
3 such tone and contrast. In the preferred embodiment, the parameters entered include  
4 only tone and contrast; however, provision could be made to allow the user to adjust  
5 other additional parameters. For example, the user could be allowed to set the other  
6 color parameters such as hue, or the user could be allowed to set other parameters such  
7 as X Resolution, Y Resolution, X Scale factor, Y Scale factor, etc.

8  
9 The resolutions may be of particular interest, since if there are \*differing\* resolutions or  
10 scale in the X and Y direction, it would be desirable to correct for this prior to attempting  
11 to detect the watermark. Resolution may be important since some watermark detectors  
12 cannot read watermarks if images have different resolutions in the X and Y direction.  
13 Also, if scale differs more than a few percent in X and Y it may make reading the  
14 watermark difficult. However, with the present invention if an image that has different  
15 sample rates or scale applied in X and Y directions, these can be adjusted prior to the  
16 watermark or pattern detection process.

17  
18 Some scanners also have a "Set Filter" command for the scanner that controls how  
19 several pixels in the X direction may be averaged together to create a smoothed image.  
20 This command can be used to manually control the filtering. Also, some scanners have  
21 an "Inquire Auto-Filtering" command that lets the software ask the scanner what filtering  
22 in (in the X direction) is being used when the scan is done in the Auto-Filter mode. With  
23 the present invention, an awareness of what type of spatial filtering is being done, and  
24 the fact that it differs in the X and Y directions, could be used to either adjust and pre-  
25 compensate prior to detection, or could affect the operation of the detection algorithms.

26  
27 As indicated by block 357, a user modified tone map which will produce an image with  
28 the desired characteristics is generated. The technique for generating a calibrated tone  
29 map from a test pattern and for altering a calibrated tone map in accordance with user  
30 entered parameters is known in the art. A "driver" which modifies a calibrated tone map  
31 in accordance with user entered parameters is provided by the manufacturer with many  
32 commercially available scanners. Finally as indicated by block 358, the user modified

1 tone map is sent to the scanner and the process proceeds as indicated in block 303 in  
2 Figure 3A.

3  
4 The preferred embodiment of the invention described above relates to enhancing the  
5 operation of a watermark detection program. The invention could be similarly applied to  
6 enhancing the operation of programs such as programs the detect geometric shapes  
7 such as logos or particular patterns in an image. Likewise the invention could be applied  
8 to enhancing the operation of feature extraction programs, such as program for face  
9 recognition, fingerprint detection etc. In all these cases the inverse user adjustment  
10 program 25 would reverse any changes made as a result of settings entered by the user.

11  
12 In embodiments that use shape or image recognition the watermark detection program  
13 26 would be replaced by an image or shape recognition program. Alternatively, a shape  
14 or image recognition program could be provided in addition to watermark detection  
15 program 26 and the output from both such programs would determine the action taken  
16 by control block 316.

17  
18 In an alternate embodiment of the invention, a special tone map is developed with the  
19 specific object of enhancing the ability to read a watermark and to detect shapes in a  
20 digital image which has been scanned. This special tone map is developed in order to  
21 reverse artifacts introduced into an image by a scanner. The special tone map is then  
22 either directly applied to the image generated by a scanner or the user adjustment  
23 program reverses any changes made to the image that differ from the values in the  
24 special tone map.

25  
26 An overall flow diagram for an alternate embodiment of the invention is shown in Figures  
27 4A to 5D. The embodiment shown in Figures 4A to 5D, takes into consideration the fact  
28 that the transfer function of a printer or scanner may differ in the x and y directions. The  
29 process begins with a digital image 420A. A watermark is introduced into the image by a  
30 watermarking program 421. The watermarking program 421 may for example be the  
31 commercially available program "Adobe PhotoShop" which is marketed by the Adobe  
32 Corporation. The watermarked image is then printed by a printer 422 resulting in a  
33 watermarked physical image 420B

1  
2 The image 420B is next passed through a scanner 423 to generate a digital image 420C  
3 as illustrated in Figure 4B. The scanner 423 has a transfer function  $S(u,v)$  where "u" and  
4 "v" are the horizontal and vertical frequency axis. Of particular importance is the fact  
5 that the transfer function of scanner 423 differs in the "x" and "y" directions.  
6 Furthermore, the transfer function of the scanner is separable in the "u" and "v"  
7 dimensions and the transfer function  $S(u,v)$  can be represented as  $S(u)$  times  $S(v)$ .

8  
9 The image 420C is passed through (or operated upon by) a transfer function 425 which  
10 approximates as close as possible the inverse of the transfer function  $S(u)$ . The image  
11 is passed through (or operated upon by) a transfer function 426 which approximates as  
12 close as possible the inverse of the transfer function  $S(v)$ . Both of the operations 425  
13 and 426 may be done simultaneously. The technique for designing a filter with a  
14 particular transfer function is well know. The result of passing the image through filters  
15 425 and 426 is a modified digital image 420D. The modified digital image 420D is then  
16 passed through a conventional watermark detection program 424 in order to detect the  
17 watermark.  
18

19 While the above embodiment relates specifically to compensating for anomalies  
20 introduced by scanner 423, the filters 425 and 426 could likewise be designed to  
21 compensate for anomalies introduced by the transfer function of the printer 422 or for  
22 both the transfer functions of printer 422 and scanner 423.  
23

24 The second embodiment of the invention described above relates to the use of filters  
25 which approximate as close as possible the inverse of the transfer function of a scanner.  
26 Such filters of necessity will be relatively complex. A simpler embodiment of the  
27 invention is illustrated in Figures 5A to 5D.  
28

29 With reference to Figures 5A to 5D, it is specifically noted that an image has a two  
30 dimensional frequency spectrum. For convenience in illustration, Figures 5A to 5C show  
31 one dimensional frequency spectra. That is, the frequency spectrum of an image is in  
32 fact two dimensional; however, the principles can be more conveniently illustrated with a  
33 diagram that shows a one dimensional frequency spectrum. Hence, Figures 5A to 5D

1 show one dimensional spectra; however, it should be understood that in fact they merely  
2 illustrate one dimension of a two dimensional spectrum.

3  
4 A scanning process is of necessity a sampling process. As is well know, a sampling  
5 process produces a periodic frequency spectrum. If sampling is at a frequency  $F_s$  the  
6 spectra are separated by  $F_s$  as shown in Figure 5A. If the sampling frequency is too low,  
7 the frequency spectra will overlap as shown in Figure 5C.

8  
9 In the case where the spectra do not overlap such as shown in Figure 5A, the  
10 compensating transfer functions 425 and 426 are designed to enhance the lower  
11 frequency components of the signal so that the spectra are relatively square as shown  
12 by spectra P1m to P3m in Figure 5B.

13  
14 In the situation where the scanner resolution (i.e. for example, the scanner sampling  
15 frequency in the X direction) produces a frequency spectrum such as that shown in  
16 Figure 5C, the watermark detection can be improved by filtering out frequency ranges A  
17 and B which are shown in Figure 5D. That is, the compensating transfer function of filter  
18 225 shown in Figure 4B would be a simple frequency filter which eliminates the  
19 frequency in ranges A and B shown in Figure 5C.

20  
21 Any printers and any scanner has a transfer functions which is particular to the particular  
22 physical characteristics of the printer. In general the manufacturer of a printer or a  
23 scanner would best understand the transfer function of a particular printer or scanner.  
24 However, if the transfer function of a printer or a scanner can not be obtained from the  
25 units manufacturer, it can be determined experimentally. The transfer function of a  
26 printer and of a scanner can be determined experimentally in various known ways. One  
27 particular technique for determining the transfer function of a printer or of a scanner is  
28 shown in Figure 6. First, a process for determining the transfer function of a scanner  
29 642 will be described.

30  
31 As illustrated in Figure 6, the process for experimentally determining a transfer function  
32 of scanner 642 begins with a digital image 640A. The image 640A should be printed on  
33 a very high quality printer to produce a physical image 640B which as closely as

possible is identical to image 640A. The physical image 640B is then scanned by scanner 642 to produce a modified digital image 640C.

Next the original digital image 640A is compared to the modified digital image 640C by a comparison program 643. Any differences between images 640A and 640C represent anomalies introduced by the scanner 642. Stated differently the image 640C is image 640A modified by the transfer functions of scanner 642. In a practical situation, dozens if not hundreds of images will be passed through the process shown in Figure 6 in order to determine, as closely as possible, the transfer function of a particular scanner.

If one wants to determine the transfer function of a printer, a very high quality scanner can be used in the process illustrated in Figure 6. In such a case differences between images 640C or 640A would due to anomalies introduced by the printer.

It is noted that instead of using a very high quality printer or scanner as described above, one could use a printer with a known characteristic when seeking to determine the transfer function of a scanner and one could use a scanner with a known transfer function when seeking to determine the transfer function of a printer. The known transfer function of the printer or scanner would then be taken into account when seeking to determine the transfer function of the other component.

The differences detected by comparison program 643 can be used to generate a function or filter that approximates the inverse of the transfer function of a printer 641 or of a scanner 642 or the differences can be used to design a compensating filter as used in the embodiment described with reference to Figures 5A to 5D. The differences in the "x" and "y" directions can be processed separately in order to be able to separately compensate for the differences in the x" and " y" directions.

While the invention has been described with respect to a number of different embodiments of the invention, it will be understood by those skilled in the art that various changes in forma and detail can be made without departing from the spirit and scope of the invention.